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**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE****FLOATING VIRTUALIZATION LAYERS**

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A virtual stored data management system is provided. In one embodiment, the management system includes one or more hosts and a plurality of data storage elements functionally coupled to the hosts. Each data storage  
10 element includes a host network attachment, data transfer means, a storage controller, and permanent data storage media. The permanent data storage media is organized with management information uniquely associated with units of the data such that the management information  
15 may be manipulated in several different locations within the management system substantially simultaneously. Thus, the organization of the management processes allows for the management information to be processed, used, changed, or modified in several different locations  
20 within the management system at any particular instance. Provision is made for the internal processes to discover the current location of the processing, for the location to be changed as directed, and for the processing to be kept consistent when done in more than one place  
25 simultaneously.